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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [SF](#)  
SUBJECT: (C) U.K. BUSINESSMAN BRANSON FUNDING "ELDER"  
INITIATIVE TO GET MUGABE OUT OF POWER

REF: PRETORIA 2210

Classified By: Ambassador Eric M. Bost. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C/NF) U.K. businessman Richard Branson is bankrolling an African "Elders" initiative to convince Zimbabwean President Mugabe to step down. The "Elders" plan to meet secretly in Johannesburg July 17-18 with Branson to discuss their initiative. Former Presidents Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Sam Nujoma (Namibia), Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia), Jerry Rawlings (Ghana), Joaquim Chissano (Mozambique), Daniel Arap Moi (Kenya) and Ketumile Masire (Botswana) have reportedly agreed to participate. Former UNSYG Kofi Annan also plans to attend the meeting. President Carter will also be in Johannesburg and will meet with the group of Elders, although it is not clear if he will be involved in the Zimbabwe discussion. The Zimbabwe initiative is being cast as supportive of the South African-led SADC mediation.

¶2. (C/NF) Former Mugabe Information Minister Jonathan Moyo is working with Branson on the plan. Moyo reached out to Branson, who owns Virgin Atlantic airline as well as a game lodge and chain of gyms in South Africa, in early June to suggest the involvement of the former African leaders. Branson agreed to fund the initiative, including Moyo's travel and technical assistance. Embassy contact Sydney Masamvu (strictly protect) provided Post with emails between Moyo and Branson, as well as a copy of Moyo's draft concept paper for the initiative.

¶3. (C/NF) Moyo's draft concept "Review of Issues and Strategy" paper (emailed to AF/S) outlines his views on the reasons behind the Zimbabwean crisis: the disagreement between the GOZ and U.K. over the "source or cause of the crisis," a "flawed constitutional dispensation," and Mugabe's unwillingness to allow anyone to succeed him "due to his deep-seated immunity fears and concerns." Moyo proposes to the Elders a four-point strategy to deal with Mugabe:

-- The Elders would travel to Zimbabwe to meet with Mugabe.

-- The Elders would urge Mugabe to support a new constitution, which would include "watertight" provisions on Mugabe's immunity from prosecution and allow for a truth and reconciliation process.

-- The new constitution would allow Mugabe to appoint an executive Prime Minister, who would form a "broad based government of all national talents and interests;" Parliament would then select a new, non-executive President.

-- This new government would last until November 2010, when a general election would be held.

14. (C/NF) Moyo suggests a script for the Elders in their proposed meeting with Mugabe:

-- tell Mugabe that they are approaching him because they "respect him" and want to safeguard his "proud legacy;"

-- express concern about the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe;

-- tell Mugabe the time has come to step aside "graciously and with dignity to allow his country to move on;"

-- stress that "it is now certain Zimbabwe will slip into dangerous chaos" if Mugabe does not step down; and

-- suggest that they support Mugabe now, but "will not be able to do so if the situation in Zimbabwe deteriorates."  
Bost